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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KPAL](#) [KTIP](#) [IS](#) [EG](#)  
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN LIAISON CHIEF DISCUSSES BORDER GUARD  
FORCES AND SMUGGLING INTERDICTION

Classified By: DCM Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

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Summary  
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11. (C) Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) Liaison Chief MG Nagy reported that Egypt has sought assistance from a petroleum company (NFI) to bolster its tunnel detection tactics on the border with Gaza. Although Egypt and Israel began a tunnel detection discussion between engineers in early 2006, cooperation stalled. Nagy said he has not yet received an indication that Israel would support Egypt's use of sensors for tunnel detection. Smuggling and infiltration interdiction efforts south of Karem Shalom are less than satisfactory because Egypt relies on poorly trained and unprofessional Central Security Police to patrol that area. Egyptian-Israeli liaison exchanges are on track, Nagy said, but there has not been a high level Joint Military Committee meeting in some time. Post is following up with petroleum sector contacts to try to confirm cooperation on border security, but Nagy's assertion that that Egypt would benefit from more professionally trained forces on the border also makes good sense. As GOE officials note, like Israel, Egypt's own internal security is at risk when smuggling persists as it increases the likelihood of additional terrorist incidents in the Sinai. End summary.

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Bolstering Tunnel detection  
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12. (C) DMI's Liaison Chief MG Nagy told poloff and DATT on October 11 that in early 2006, Egypt asked Israel for advice on tunnel detection techniques. Nagy explained that he requested coordination meetings among Egyptian and Israeli engineers aimed at improving the Border Guard Forces' (BGF) ability to detect tunnels and thwart smuggling. Israel Defense officials hosted Egyptian engineers on the Israeli side of the Karem Shalom crossing, but only showed the Egyptians trench digging equipment instead of sensors. When the Egyptians asked to discuss the use of sensors, the Israelis declined and the exchange did not continue. Nagy said he has not yet received an indication that Israel would support BGF use of sensors (or other technology). In the meantime, Nagy said DMI is working with a petroleum company (NFI) to enhance Egypt's tunnel detection capability.

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Police role in counter-smuggling  
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13. (C) Nagy said Egypt also hopes to deploy more BGF to the Gaza border to reduce the reliance on the interior ministry's Central Security Police (CSP) for counter-smuggling. Nagy alleged that the police are poorly trained and not focused on the counter smuggling mission. Nagy also faulted the lack of professionalism among Central Security Police for infiltration and smuggling problems in the area south of Karem Shalom. The poorly paid police are not committed to the mission, sleep on the job, and even steal MoD-donated equipment such as binoculars, night vision goggles, and vehicles, Nagy said. When poloff asked about the October 1 Reuters report that some CSP assigned in the North Sinai town of Al Arish were arrested for involvement in a network to sell weapons and explosives to Palestinians and Bedouin, Nagy said the problem is "everywhere." (Note: Following the October 1 report, Post's Ministry of Interior contacts downplayed the arrest, asserting that the Al Arish network and arrests were an aberration involving very few individuals. End note).

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The Bedouin Element  
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14. (C) According to Nagy, some Bedouin are involved in both stealing and smuggling signal cables and ammunition shells because the copper is valuable. He said the Bedouin also sell fuses from mortars to Palestinians for use in their homemade Kassem rockets. While the Kassems are ineffective, they remain an irritant to Israel, Nagy noted.

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Egyptian-Israeli Liaison  
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15. (C) Nagy, who heads the GOE's Liaison Agency with International Organizations (LAWIO), described liaison with Israeli counterparts as good, but said that his Israeli counterpart, General Dickel, is stretched thin because he also oversees strategic planning and the military attach section. Nagy said that Dickel's claims to be available immediately "24/7," have not proven true. Although Dickel has good intentions, he is occasionally slow to respond, Nagy said. Nonetheless, working level liaison officers speak on the phone daily and meet weekly. Egypt would like to schedule a Joint Military Committee meeting some time after Ramadan, Nagy observed, but lower level exchanges need to take place first in order to agree on an agenda and resolve minor points of contention.

16. (C) In his role as Chief of LAWIO for the past several years, MG Nagy also led the GOE team that negotiated the agreement to deploy the Border Guard Forces on the Gaza border. He also advises the Minister of Defense Field Marshal Tantawi and the Director of Military Intelligence on issues pertaining to liaison with Israel and the Border Guard Forces and coordinates with the Ministry of Interior to secure police support for the BGF in the North Sinai and, as needed, on the Gaza border.

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Comment  
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17. (C) Post is following up with petroleum industry contacts to verify GOE efforts to acquire enhanced tunnel detection equipment. Ultimately, however, Nagy's claim that Egypt needs more professionally trained bodies on the job makes good sense. Allegations in the Israeli press about the deficiencies in GOE counter-smuggling efforts anger GOE officials, who explain that smuggling interdiction has increased dramatically since the BGF deployed. As DMI and Ministry of Defense contacts note, Egypt, like Israel, stands to lose when smuggling persists because it of the increased likelihood that additional terrorist incidents may occur in the Sinai -- a scenario that could also pose a threat to

Egypt's vital tourism industry.  
JONES